

REMARKS

In the Official Action mailed on **December 15, 2004** the Examiner reviewed claims 1-49. The Examiner requested a statement concerning known prior art. Claims 1-5, 17-21, and 33-37 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claims 1-3, 17-19, and 33-35 were rejected under U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over applicant's admitted prior art, (hereinafter "AAPA"), in view of Austin (USPN 5,388,157, hereinafter "Austin"). Claims 4-5, 20-21, and 36-37 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. Claims 6-16, 22-32, and 38-48 were allowed.

Prior art

Applicant is not aware of any references, which would qualify as prior art under 35 U.S.C §§102 of 103 with respect to the invention.

Typographical errors

Applicant has amended claim 12 to correct a typographical error. No new matter has been added.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph

Claims 1-5, 17-21, and 33-37 were rejected as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 17, and 33 to clarify the terminology. These amendments find support in FIGs. 12 and 13, and in paragraphs [0036]-[0038] of the instant application.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1-3, 17-19, and 33-35 were rejected as being unpatentable over AAPA in view of Austin.

Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 17, and 33 to include allowable limitations from claims 2 and 4, claims 19 and 21, and claims 35 and 37, respectively. Claims 2, 4, 18, 20, 34, and 36 have been canceled without prejudice. Claims 3, 5, 19, 21, 35, and 37 have been amended to correct antecedent basis. Claims 6-16, 22-32, and 38-48 were previously allowed.


Hence, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1, 6, 13, 17, 22, 29, 33, 38, and 45 as presently amended are in condition for allowance. Applicant also submits that claims 3 and 5, which depend upon claim 1, claims 7-12, which depend upon claim 6, claims 14-16, which depend upon claim 13, claims 19 and 21, which depend upon claim 17, claims 23-28, which depend upon claim 22, claims 30-32, which depend upon claim 29, claims 35 and 37, which depend upon claim 33, claims 39-44, which depend upon claim 38, and claims 46-48, which depend upon claim 45, are for the same reasons in condition for allowance and for reasons of the unique combinations recited in such claims.

CONCLUSION

It is submitted that the present application is presently in form for allowance. Such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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